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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-UN, ECONOMIC, IRAN, AFGHANISTAN,  
MIDEAST, U.S.-UK, HONDURAS, GERMANY;BERLIN

- ¶1. Lead Stories Summary
- ¶2. (U.S.-UN) President Obama's Speech
- ¶3. (Economic) G-20 Summit
- ¶4. (Iran) Nuclear Conflict, Ahmadinejad
- ¶5. (Afghanistan) New U.S. Strategy
- ¶6. (Mideast) Summit Meeting
- ¶7. (U.S.-UK) Relations
- ¶8. (Honduras) Zelaya in Brazilian Embassy
- ¶9. (Germany) Upcoming Elections

- ¶1. Lead Stories Summary

ZDF-TV's and ARD-TV's primetime newscasts opened with stories on the protests of Opel workers in the Belgian city of Antwerp. Newspapers led with stories on the G20 summit and Opel. Editorials focused on the G20 summit, President Obama's speech to the UN, and the future of carmaker Opel.

- ¶2. (U.S.-UN) President Obama's Speech

All media reported on President Obama's speech to the UN General Assembly, highlighting that "Obama asked the world for help" to resolve problems together (Frankfurter Rundschau) and quoting him prominently as saying "America cannot solve all problems alone" (Spiegel Online).

Sueddeutsche Zeitung (9/24) commented: "After eight months in office, Obama has seen heights some of his predecessors never enjoyed. However, he has now reached the valley of tears. His presidency is in trouble. Barack Obama is facing weeks, if not even months of ordeal. Only after that time we will be able to judge whether the man as the stature one recently associated with him.... His presidency is passing in quick motion: a clumsy photo opportunity with the Mideast rivals, a hesitating Obama in climate negotiations, challenged by the Congress and the military leadership. Obama is a man of announcements, not of action. However, this is the beginning of a crisis, not the end. Apparently, there is great determination behind Obama's much praised

coolness. Somebody who proved so much stamina and finesse in the election campaign, will cope with the political business. However, it is past the time of great speeches and noble calls. A UN speech full of emotions seems to be ridiculous when the roof is on fire at home. Obama will have to show toughness and courage if he wants to remain credible."

Under a headline "A world of words," Die Welt (9/24) opined on its front page: "It is an invaluable advantage that the U.S. has a President who is blessed with the gift of delivering speeches.... However, we are getting tired recently. The high tone, Obama is always using, is somehow strenuous.... Slowly, not only Americans wonder what all these nice words are supposed to mean if the President does not deliver successes."

Tagesspiegel (9/24) remarked in a front-page commentary: "Barack Obama has become the victim of the expectations he has raised. His popularity was long seen as a trump card in America's foreign policy. It is now becoming a burden. It is suddenly imaginable that the U.S. and its partners are entering a spiral of disappointment. The headlines in Europe on Obama's activities at the UN document disillusionment.... Obama has contributed to this misunderstanding, and he is continuing to do so. He knows about the impact his speeches have and uses them to exert pressure to change things. However, this leads to an overestimation of the influence the U.S. President has.... The reality shock was overdue. Wrong expectations are not a good basis for politics. We should neither

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exaggerate the disappointment."

### 13. (Economic) G-20 Summit

"The Great Redistribution of Wealth," is the headline in Sueddeutsche Zeitung (9/24), which opined: "The announcements for the G-20 summit again sound brilliant. Each participant emphasizes how much we must learn from the crash...but in reality, nothing has changed over the past months since the monetary system was about to crash and mankind looked into an abyss. The shock let up and old habits have returned. A great redistribution of wealth has taken place and a small group profited from the development of a financial bubble, while the costs for the disaster must be shouldered by many people. But politicians are far away from taking really radical steps. The reason is that the banks in the U.S. and Britain have roped in their governments. In view of strong interests, it is no wonder that good ideas from Europe have little chances to be approved in Pittsburgh. However, it is striking that one item does not appear on the agenda in Pittsburgh: the question of the future look of the global economic system. Obviously, the great redistribution of wealth should continue as before."

In a front-page editorial, Frankfurter Allgemeine (9/24) argued: "Americans and British are working on a large-scale global control. At the third Global Financial Summit, they want to agree on strategies to reduce imbalances in the global economy. And surplus countries such as China, Japan, and Germany must expect pressure to increase their demand. Behind these moves from Washington and London stands a mechanistic way of thinking. If demand drops, a few screws will be turned around at different places to create new demand elsewhere. But in the 1960s, Germany already succumbed to the error that it is possible to fine-tune the economy. The result of this large-scale attempt entered the history books as stagflation. But now the Anglo-Saxons of all nations have given in to the magic of a policy of demand. After the large U.S. shopping mall has entered a crisis, because the sale via credit cards met its limits, other countries should now put things straight and consume at all costs to create a new global economic growth. But experience with globalization has taught us one thing: growth cannot be bought on credit for a long time."

Schwaebische Zeitung of Leutkirch (9/24) observed: "The third summit must finally produce results. This meeting is a possibility to pause and review all regulations and rules to change them and also to make them stricter. Admittedly, this is an enormous task and also highly complex. But it is not necessary to re-invent the wheel. Many things are still functioning and the global monetary

system is still intact, the market economy without alternative. We must now concentrate on the black sheep of the system. The banks that exploited gaps in legislation and sold junk must now be shown their limits and all those dangerous 'financial products' that damaged other, need to be banned."

Regional daily Saarbruecker Zeitung (9/24) is critical of a successful G-20 summit and noted: "Yesterday's [EU] proposal is neither new nor original, and the same is true for the concerns. Instead, Brussels missed the opportunity to present a convincing model shared by all sides at the G-20 summit. With this approach, the EU makes it easy for the United States (and other countries) to use the disagreement among the Europeans as an instrument to defend itself against too rigorous a control. Washington's course in particular demonstrates that the international community was quick with presenting catchphrases but that it took a lot of time to make decisions on new approaches to prevent future crises. That is why we must fear that the much lauded [G-20] conference will turn into a show, that slogans will be exchanged that only hush up the fact that all sides involved do not really want the things that they urgently wanted a while ago."

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Straubinger Tagblatt/Landshuter Zeitung (9/24) had this to say: "Politicians should not let up but must cut the proliferation in the financial sectors in various countries. Unfortunately, the prospect for successful moves in this respect is not very favorable. It is likely that the 'window of opportunities' has already been closed again. At Wall Street and in the City, the party has already begun again. That is why the G-20 summit in Pittsburgh is not under a good star. The tax on financial transactions suggested by Finance Minister Steinbrueck is not implementable on the international stage but Steinbrueck's question is very justified: Who is going to pay the bill for an immoderate greed, for the exaggerations and the irresponsibility of the financial sector? Of course, the ordinary people."

Right-of-center Augsburger Allgemeine (9/24) judged: "In order to avoid crises such as the current one, we needed a kind of global financial police force. The strictest bans will be useless if no one sees to it that these rules are also implemented. But it is also clear that the banks in particular must do their homework. They need sufficient capital resources to help themselves instead of calling for the assistance from the state. If necessary, politicians should force the banks to build up such reserves."

Regional daily Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger (9/24) argued: "Angela Merkel does not hide her conviction that the G-20 is a more appropriate forum to resolve global problems than the G-8.... In the United States a rethinking has begun, too. Unlike his predecessors, Barack Obama is working hard to achieve a global alliance for greater security and an alliance for the fight against climate change."

#### 14. (Iran) Nuclear Conflict, Ahmadinejad

ZDF-TV's Heute (9/23) reported: "Iran's President Ahmadinejad caused a scandal at the UN General Assembly. In a speech, he attacked Israel again, calling it as a Zionist regime and describing its policy on Palestinians as genocide. Several delegations left the hall, including the German one." The report added that Iran's nuclear program "was the topic of a meeting between President Medvedev and President Obama. Medvedev indicated that Russia might agree on imposing tougher sanctions on Iran."

Handelsblatt (9/24) commented that "the advocates of sanctions on Iran have found a new tactic-they are intimidating companies through public statements." The commentary added: "However, if China remains unimpressed and continues to export goods to Iran, it would be clear how toothless the West's policy of sanction has become."

#### 15. (Afghanistan) New U.S. Strategy

There is only one paper this morning that reports on the debate in the United States over the future Afghanistan strategy. Under the

headline: "Biden's Backchat," Sueddeutsche (9/24) reported: "The U.S. government is questioning the war in Afghanistan and the NATO mission in a more radical way than has been previously known. According to the New York Times, it is especially Vice President Joe Biden who is urging the government to reduce the number of U.S. soldiers in the countries to 68,000 soldiers in the medium term and to intensify air raids against alleged al-Qaida bases. This would be a break with Obama's 'comprehensive, new strategy' to defeat Taliban fighters...."

#### 16. (Mideast) Summit Meeting

Suedwestrundfunk (9/23) radio commented: "Obama cannot afford a further Mideast meeting of this kind, which damages the foreign policy reputation of the U.S. President so considerably. Netanyahu

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humiliated and made a fool out of the young man in the White House.... Given Obama's apparent foreign political harmlessness, Netanyahu was able to show the world that not the U.S. superpower defines the key issues in the Mideast conflict, but Israel.... Obama has failed in the first and essential power struggle with the Israeli prime minister. In New York, the Israeli prime minister deliberately duped the U.S. President and made him appear as a beginner in foreign politics. This was not smart."

Tageszeitung (9/24) remarked: "The body language of the participants in the trilateral meeting in New York does not raise hope that peace will soon be created in the Mideast. Palestinian President Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu hesitated to shake hands. By accepting the invitation, both made the impression that they wanted to do a favor to President Obama.... Neither for Israelis nor the Palestinians is the two-state solution attractive. However, it is the only solution that would be acceptable to both sides and the only one that could prevent further bloodshed. Anything else is a dangerous utopia."

#### 17. (U.S.-UK) Relations

Under the headline: "Deterrence Is a thing of the Past," Sueddeutsche Zeitung (9/24) editorialized: "PM Brown's proposal to cut the number of British nuclear submarines from four to three is nothing but the desperate attempt to get back the goodwill of the U.S. government and President Obama. Washington is still annoyed at the release of Lockerbie assassin al-Meghrabi. Brown can now feel how angry Washington is because it is very likely that President Obama will not meet PM Brown at the UN General Assembly. Admittedly, with his surprise offer, Brown is the first representative of an official nuclear power who is backing Obama's disarmament initiative. But the president's enthusiasm and gratitude is likely to be limited, for Washington knows that Britain cannot afford its expensive nuclear deterrence anyway. Even the conservative opposition has announced cuts, but it is honest and cited budgetary reasons."

#### 18. (Honduras) Zelaya in Brazilian Embassy

Sueddeutsche Zeitung (9/24) headlined: "Dangerous Soap Opera," and judged: "It is really time for Honduras to peacefully end its dangerous soap opera. This poor country with its greedy elite cannot afford this power struggle. Since ex-President Zelaya has sneaked back to the country and has hidden in the Brazilian embassy, the duel between the elite and Zelaya is now turning into a battle. Honduras urgently needs international mediators. The putschists should by no means assert their views. This would be a tragedy for Latin America's hardly fought democracies. Diplomatic pressure should now definitely force Micheletti's puppet regime to give in before the armed forces and demonstrators cause a bloodbath. Micheletti must enter into talks with Zelaya and restore basic rights. And Honduras and its helpers should then also urgently focus on the real problems in the country: poverty, inequality, and violence."

In the view of Die Welt (9/24), "intelligent crisis management is now necessary but also the development of a draft with a long-term perspective for Honduras. But in the case of Honduras, Brazil's

Foreign Minister Celso Amorim had not demonstrated these things. Now it is coming back to haunt Brazil that it did not use the past months for a negotiating solution, for one thing is clear: There is not a more confusing situation in the world than the one in Honduras. The crisis is still solvable and the key to it November 29, the day of the presidential elections. Thus far, Brazil has not taken advantage of the situation to talk about a new beginning with both sides. In Honduras, more is at stake than the future of a banana republic. At issue is whether Venezuela's President Hugo

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Chvez gets control over another country. This needs to be prevented."

#### 19. (Germany) Upcoming Elections

Mass tabloid Bild (9/24) commented: "This was not an enthusiastic and emotional election campaign that touched our hearts and exited our minds. But does this mean that the election is boring? Not at all, it is a fateful election-for the country and the Social Democrats.... Germany does not left-wing shouters, but a moderate and reliable left-wing force like the SPD. Voters must make a decision now whether the Social Democrats should be the junior partner in another grand coalition. Or should they regain to old strength by sharpening their profile in opposition to a center-right government of the CDU/CSU and FDP? One thing seems to be clear: If the SPD continues to lose its profile in coming years, the left-wing of the party will rebel against its leadership and unite with the Left Party. A coalition of the SPD, Left Party and the Greens might then soon govern this country. This election is also the last exit to avoid a Germany that is guided by the Communists."

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Obama has become the victim of the expectations he has raised. His popularity was long seen as a trump card in America's foreign policy. It is now becoming a burden. It is suddenly imaginable that

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the U.S. and its partners are entering a spiral of disappointment. The headlines in Europe on Obama's activities at the UN document disillusionment.... Obama has contributed to this misunderstanding, and he is continuing to do so. He knows about the impact his speeches have and uses them to exert pressure to change things. However, this leads to an overestimation of the influence the U.S. President has.... The reality shock was overdue. Wrong expectations are not a good basis for politics. We also should not exaggerate the disappointment."

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itself against too rigorous a control. Washington's course in particular demonstrates that the international community was quick with presenting catchphrases but that it took a lot of time to make decisions on new approaches to prevent future crises. That is why we must fear that the much lauded [G-20] conference will turn into a show, that slogans will be exchanged that only hush up the fact that all sides involved do not really want the things that they urgently wanted a while ago."

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In the view of Die Welt (9/24), "intelligent crisis management is now necessary but also the development of a draft solution with long-term perspective for Honduras. But in the case of Honduras, Brazil's Foreign Minister Celso Amorim had not demonstrated these things. Now it is coming back to haunt Brazil that it did not use the past months for negotiating a solution. One thing is clear,

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there is not a more confusing situation in the world than the one in Honduras. The crisis is still solvable and the key to it is November 29, the day of the presidential elections. Thus far, Brazil has not taken advantage of the situation to talk about a new beginning with both sides. In Honduras, more is at stake than the future of a banana republic. At issue is whether Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez gets control over another country. This needs to be prevented."

#### 18. (Germany) Upcoming Elections



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MURPHY